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THE Bishop of *BANGOR's* LATE SERMON, AND HIS *LETTER to Dr.* SNAPE *in Defence of it*, ANSWER'D.

And the Dangerous Nature of some Doctrines in his *Preservative*, Set forth in a Letter to his Lordship.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

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My Lord,

THAT your Lordship may be prepar'd to receive, what I here presume to lay before you, with the greater Candour, I sincerely profess, that it does not proceed from any Prejudice; but from certain Reasons, upon which I find my self invincibly oblig'd, to differ from your Lordship in Opinion.

To prevent all Suspicion of my designing any thing injurious to your Lordship's Character, in this Address, I have prefix'd what otherwise, I should have chosen to conceal, my Name to it.

Your Lordship is represented as at the Head of a Cause, where every Adversary is sure to be reproach'd, either as a Furious Jacobite, or Popish Bigot, as an Enemy to the Liberty of his Country, and the Protestant Cause. These hard Names are to be expected, my Lord, from a Set of Men, who dishonour your Lordship with their Panegyricks upon your Performances; whose Praises defile the Character they would adorn.

When Dr. *Snape* represents your Lordship as no Friend to the good Orders, and necessary Institutions of the Church; you complain of the ill Arts of an Adversary, who sets you out in false Colours, perverts your Words, on purpose to encrease his own *Imaginary Triumphs*. But, my Lord, in this, Dr. *Snape* only thinks with those who would be counted your Best Friends; and would no longer be your Friends, but that they conclude, you have declar'd against the Authority of the Church. Does your Lordship suppose, that the *T——ds*, the *H——ks*, the *B——ts*, would be at so much Expence of Time and Labour, to justifie, commend and enlarge upon your Lordship's Notions, if they did not think you engag'd in their Cause? There is not a Libertine, or Loose-Thinker in *England*, but he imagines you intend to dissolve the Church as a *Society*, and are ready to offer Incense to your Lordship

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for so meritorious a Design. It is not my Intention to reproach your Lordship with their Esteem, or to involve you in the Guilt of their Schemes; but to shew, that an Adversary does not need any Malice to make him believe you no Friend to the Constitution of the Church, as a Regular Society, since your Greatest Admirers every Day publish it by necessary Construction to the World in Print.

After a Word or two concerning a Passage in your Lordship's *Preservative*, I shall proceed to consider your Answer to Dr. *Snape*. In the 98th Page you have these Words; *But when you are secure of your Integrity before God,— this will lead you (as it ought all of us) not to be afraid of the Terrors of Men, or the vain Words of Regular, and Uninterrupted Successions, Authoritative Benedictions, Excommunications,— Nullity, or Validity of God's Ordinances to the People upon Account of Niceties and Trifles, or any other the like Dreams.*

My Lord, thus much must be imply'd here: Be not afraid of the Terrors of Men, who would persuade you of the Danger of being in this, or that Communion, and fright you into particular Ways of worshipping God, who would make you believe such Sacraments, and such Clergy, are necessary to recommend you to his Favour. But these, your Lordship affirms, we may contemn, if we are but secure of our Integrity. So that, if a Man be not a *Hypocrite*, it matters not what Religion he is of. This is a Proposition of an Unfriendly Aspect to Christianity: But that it is entirely your Lordship's, is plain from what you declare, P. 90. *That every one may find it in his own Conduct to be true, that his Title to God's Favour cannot depend upon his actual being, or continuing in any particular Method; but upon his real Sincerity in the Conduct of his Conscience.* Again, P. 91. *The Favour of God follows Sincerity considered as such, and consequently, equally follows every equal Degree of Sincerity.* So that, I hope, I have not wrested your Lordship's Meaning, by saying, that according to these Notions, if a Man be not an Hypocrite, it matters not what Religion he is of. Not only sincere *Quakers*, *Ranters*,

Ranters, *Muggletonians*, and *Fifth Monarchy Men*, are as much in the Favour of God as any of the Apostles; but likewise sincere *Jews*, *Turks* and *Deists*, are upon as good a Bottom, and as secure of the Favour of God, as the sincerest Christian.

For your Lordship saith, it is Sincerity, as such, that procures the Favour of God. If it be Sincerity, as such, then it is Sincerity independent and exclusive of any particular Way of Worship: And if the *Favour of God equally follows* every equal *Degree* of *Sincerity*, then it is impossible there should be any Difference, either as to Merit or Happiness, between a sincere *Martyr*, and a sincere *Persecutor*; and he that burns the Christian, if he be but in earnest, has the same Title to a Reward for it, as he that is burnt for believing in Christ.

Your Lordship saith, you can't help it, if People will charge you with * *Evil Intentions* and *Bad Views*. I intend no such Charge: But I wonder, your Lordship should think it hard, that any one should infer from these Places, that you *are against the Interest of the Church of* England.

For, my Lord, cannot the *Quakers*. *Muggletonians*, *Deists*, *Presbyterians*, assert you as much in their Interest as we can? Have you said any thing for us, or done any thing for us in this *Preservative*, but what you have equally done for them? Your Lordship is ours, as you fill a Bishoprick; but we are at a loss to discover from this Discourse, what other Interest we have in your Lordship: For you openly expose our Communion, and give up all the Advantages of it, by telling all sorts of People, if they are but sincere in their own Way, they are as much in God's Favour, as any Body else. Is this supporting our Interest, my Lord?

Suppose a Friend of King *George*, should declare it to all *Britians* whatever, that tho' they were divided into five thousand different Parties, to set up different *Pretenders*; yet if they were but sincere in their Designs,

* *Answer*, p. 46.

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they would be as much in the Favour of God, as those who are most firmly attach'd to his Majesty. Does your Lordship think such a one would be thought any mighty Friend to the Government? And, my Lord, is not this the Declaration you made as to the Church of *England*? Have you not told all Parties, that their Sincerity is enough? Have you said so much as one Word in Recommendation of our Communion? Or, if it was not for your Church-Character in the Title-Pages of this Discourse, could any one alive conceive what Communion you was of? Nay, a Reader that was a Stranger, would imagine, that he who will allow no Difference between Communions, is himself of no Communion. Your Lordship, for ought I know, may act according to the strictest Sincerity, and may think it your Duty to undermine the Foundations of the Church. I am only surprized, that you should refuse to own the Reasonableness of such a Charge. Your Lordship hath cancell'd all our Obligations to any particular Communion, upon pretence of *Sincerity*.

I hope, my Lord, there is Mercy in store for all sorts of People, however erroneous in their Way of Worshipping God; but cannot believe, that to be a sincere Christian, is to be no more in the Favour of God, than to be a sincere *Deist*, or sincere *Destroyer* of Christians. It will be allow'd, that Sincerity is a necessary Principle of true Religion; and that without it, all the most specious Appearances of Vertue are nothing worth: But still, neither common Sense, nor plain Scripture, will suffer me to think, that when our Saviour was on Earth, they were as much in the Favour of God, who sincerely refused to be his Disciples, and sincerely call'd for his Crucifixion, as those who sincerely left all and follow'd him. If they were, my Lord, where is that Blessedness of Believing so often mentioned in the Scripture? Or where is the Happiness of the Gospel-Revelation, if they are as well who refuse it sincerely, as those who embrace it with Integrity?

Our Saviour declar'd, that those who believ'd, should be saved; but those who believ'd not, should be damned.

ned. Will your Lordship say, that all Unbelievers were insincere; or that tho' they were damned, they were yet in the same Favour of God, as those that were saved?

The Apostle assures us, that *there is no other Name under Heaven given unto Men, whereby they can be saved*, but Jesus Christ. But your Lordship hath found out an Atonement, more universal than that of his Blood; and which will even make those blessed and happy, who count it an *unholy Thing*. For seeing it is *Sincerity, as such*, that alone recommends us to the Favour of God, they who sincerely persecute this Name, are in as good a Way, as those that sincerely worship it. Has God declar'd this to be the only Way to Salvation? How can your Lordship tell the World, that Sincerity will save them, be they in what Way they will? Is this all the Necessity of Christ's Satisfaction? Is this all the Advantage of the Gospel-Covenant, that those who sincerely contemn it, are in as good a State without it, as those that embrace it?

My Lord, here is no Aggravation of your Meaning. If Sincerity, as such, be the only thing that recommends us to God, and every equal Degree of it procures an equal Degree of Favour; it is a Demonstration, that Sincerity *against* Christ is as pleasing to God, as Sincerity *for* him. My Lord, this is a Doctrine which no Words can enough decry. So I shall leave it, to consider, what Opinion St. *Paul* had of this kind of Sincerity. He did not think, when he persecuted the Church, tho' he did it *ignorantly*, and in Unbelief, and out of Zeal towards God, that he was as much in the Favour of God, as when he suffer'd for Christ. *I am the least*, saith he, *of the Apostles, not fit to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of Christ.* The Apostle does not scruple to charge himself with Guilt, notwithstanding his Sincerity.

A little Knowledge of Human Nature will teach us, that our Sincerity may be often charged with Guilt; not as if we were guilty, because we are sincere; but because it may be our Fault that we are hearty and sincere in such or such ill-grounded Opinions. It may

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have been from some ill Conduct of our own, some Irregularities, or Abuse of our Faculties, that we conceive things as we do, and are fix'd in such or such Tenets. And can we think so much owing to a *Sincerity* in Opinions, contracted by ill Habits and guilty Behaviour? There are several faulty Ways, by which People may cloud and prejudice their Understandings, and throw themselves into a very odd Way of thinking; or for some cause or other, *God may send them a strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie.* And will your Lordship say, that those who are thus sunk into Errors, it may be, thro' their own ill Conduct, or as a Judgment of God upon them, are as much in his Favour as those who love and adhere to the Truth. This, my Lord, is a shocking Opinion, and has given Numbers of Christians great Offence, as contradicting common Sense, and plain Scripture; as setting all Religion upon the Level as to the Favour of God.

The next thing, that according to your Lordship, *we ought not to be concerned at, is vain Words of Regular and Uninterrupted Successions, as Niceties, Trifles and Dreams.* Thus much surely, is imply'd in these Words; that no kind of *Ordination*, or *Mission* of the Clergy, is of any Consequence or Moment to us. For if the Ordination need not be Regular, or deriv'd from those who had Authority from Christ to Ordain, it is plain, that no particular kind of Ordination can be of any more Value than another. For no Ordination whatever, can have any worse Defects, than as being Irregular, and not derived by a Succession from Christ. So that if these Circumstances are to be look'd on as *Trifles* and *Dreams*: All the Difference that can be supposed betwixt any Ordinations, comes under the same Notion of Trifles and Dreams; and consequently are either good alike, or trifling alike. So that *Quakers, Independents, Presbyterians*, according to your Lordship, have as much Reason to think their Teachers as useful to them, and as true Ministers of Christ, as those of the Episcopal Communion have to think their Teachers. For if Regularity of Ordination, and Uninterrupted

Succession,

ucceſſion, be mere Trifles, and nothing; then all the difference betwixt us and other Teachers, muſt be nothing: For they can differ from us in no other re-ſpects. So that, my Lord, if Epiſcopal Ordination, ived from Chriſt, hath been contended for by the hurch of *England*, your Lordſhip hath in this Point erted her: And you not only give up Epiſcopal Or-ination, by ridiculing a Succeſſion; but likewiſe by e ſame Argument exclude any *Miniſters* on Earth om having Chriſt's Authority. For if there be not Succeſſion of Perſons authorized from Chriſt to ſend thers to act in his Name, then both Epiſcopal and resbyterian Teachers are equally *Uſurpers*, and as mere *ymen* as any at all. For there can't be any other difference between the Clergy and Layety, but as the e hath Authority deriv'd from Chriſt, to perform ices, which the other hath not. But this Autho-ty can be no otherwiſe had, than by an Uninterrup-d Succeſſion of Men from Chriſt, empower'd to qua-ie others. For if the Succeſſion be once broke, Peo-e muſt either go into the Miniſtry of their own Ac-ord, or be ſent by ſuch as have no more Power to nd others, than to go themſelves. And, my Lord, n theſe be called Miniſters of Chriſt, or receiv'd as is Ambaſſadors? Can they be thought to act in his ame, who have no Authority from him? If ſo, your ordſhip's Servant might Ordain and Baptize to as uch purpoſe as your Lordſhip: For it could only be bjected to ſuch Actions, that they had no Authority om Chriſt. And if there be no Succeſſion of Ordain-rs from him, every one is equally qualified to Ordain. ly Lord, I ſhould think, it might be granted me, that he Adminiſtring of a Sacrament is an Action we have o right to perform, conſider'd either as Men, Gentle-nen, or Scholars, or Members of a Civil Society: Who then can have any Authority to interpoſe, but e that has it from Chriſt? And how that can be had om him, without a Succeſſion of Men from him, is ot eaſily conceiv'd. Should a private Perſon chooſe Lord Chancellour, and declare his Authority good;

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would there be any thing but Absurdity, Impudenc and Presumption in it? But why he can't as well com mission a Person to act, sign, and seal in the King's Name, as in the Name of Christ, is unaccountable.

My Lord, it is a plain and obvious Truth, that no Man, or Number of Men, consider'd as such, can any more make a Priest, or commission a Person to officiate in Christ's Name, *as such*, than he can enlarge the Means of Grace, or add a new Sacrament for the Conveyance of Spiritual Advantages. The Ministers of Christ are as much *positive Ordinances*, as the Sacraments; and we might as well think, that Sacraments not instituted by him, might be Means of Grace, as those pass for his Ministers, who have no Authority from him.

Once more, all things are either in common in the Church of Christ, or they are not: If they are, then every one may Preach, Baptize, Ordain, *&c.* If all things are not thus common; but the Administring of the Sacrament, and Ordination, *&c.* are Offices appropriated to particular Persons; then I desire to know, how in this present Age, or any other since the Apostles, Christians can know their respective Duties or what they may, or may not do, with respect to the several Acts of Church-Communion, if there be no *Uninterrupted Succession* of Authoriz'd Persons from Christ. For till Authority from Christ appears, to make a Difference between them, we are all alike, and any one may officiate as well as another. To make a Jest of therefore the *Uninterrupted Succession*, is to make a Jest of Ordination; to destroy the Sacred Character, and make all Pretenders to it, as good as those that are sent by Christ.

If there be no *Uninterrupted Succession*, then there are no Authoriz'd Ministers from Christ; if no such Ministers, then no Christian Sacraments; if no Christian Sacraments, then no Christian Covenant, whereof the Sacraments are the Stated and Visible Seals.

My Lord, this is all your own: Here are no Consequences palm'd upon you; but the first, plain, and obvi-

vious Sense of your Lordship's Words.---- And yet after all, your Lordship asks Dr. *Snape*, why all those *Outcries* against you *? Indeed, my Lord, you have only taken the main supports of our Religion away; you have neither left us Priest, nor Sacrament, nor Church: Or, what is the same thing, you have made them all *Trifles* and *Dreams*. And what has your Lordship given us in the room of all these Advantages? Why only *Sincerity*; this is the great universal Atonement for all: This is that, which, according to your Lordship, will help us to the Communion of Saints hereafter, tho' we are in Communion with any body, or no body, here.

The next thing we are not to be afraid of, are, *the Vain Words of Nullity and Validity of God's Ordinances*, *i. e.* whether they are administred by a Clergyman or a Lay-man. This indeed I have shewn, was included in what you said about the Trifle of *Uninterrupted Succession*. But, for fear we should have overlook'd it there, you have given it us in express Words in the next Line.

Your Lordship tells Dr. *Snape*, that *you know no Confusion*, Glorious or Inglorious, *that you have endeavoured to introduce* into the Church †.

My Lord, if I may presume to repeat your own Words, Lay your Hand on your Heart, and ask your self, whether the encouraging all manner of Divisions, be not endeavouring to introduce Confusion? If there were in *England* Five Thousand different Sects, has not your Lordship persuaded them to be content with themselves; not to value what they are told by other Communions; that if they are but sincere, they need not have regard to any thing else? Is not this to introduce Confusion? What is Confusion, but difference and Division? And does not your Lordship plainly declare to the World, that there is no need of uniring? That there is no particular way or Method that can recommend us more to the Favour of God, than another? Has your Lordship so much as given the least Hint, that 'tis better to be in

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* *Answ. p.* 40. † *Answ. p.* 47.

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the Communion of the Church of *England*, than not? Have you not exposed her Sacraments, and Clergy; and as much as lay in you, broke down every thing in her, that distinguishes her from Fanatical Conventicles? What is there in her as a Church, that you left untouch'd? What have you left in her, that can any way invite others into her Communion? Are her Clergy Authoriz'd more than others? For fear that should be thought, you make a Regular Succession from Christ a *Trifle*. Are her Sacraments more regularly administred? Lest that should recommend her, you slight the *Nullity, or Validity of God's Ordinance*. Is there any Authority in her Laws, which enjoyn Communion with her? Lest this should be believ'd, you tell us that our being or continuing in any particular Method (or particular Communion) cannot recommend us more to the Favour of God than another.

I must observe to your Lordship, that these Opinions are very odly put in a *Preservative from ill Principles*; or *an Appeal to the Consciences and Common Sense of the Layety*. Are they to be persuaded not to joyn with the Nonjurors, because no particular Priests, no particular Sacraments, or particular Communion is any thing but a Dream and Trifle; and such things as no way recommend us to the Favour of God more than others? Are the Nonjurors only thus to be answer'd? Is the Establish'd Church thus to be defended? Your Lordship indeed has not minc'd the matter: But, I hope, the Church of *England* is to be supported upon better Principles, or not at all.

If I should tell a Person that put a Case of Conscience to me, that all Cases of Conscience are Trifles, and signifie nothing; it would be plain, that I had given him a direct Answer. But if he had either Conscience, or common Sense, he would seek out a better Confessor.

Your Lordship tells Dr. *Snape*, that he saith and unsaith, to the *great Diversion of the Roman Catholicks* *. But

* *Answ. p.* 26.

If your Lordship would unsay some things you have said, it would be a greater Mortification to them, than all that ever you said, or writ in your Life. To deny the Necessity of any particular Communion, to expose the Validity of Sacraments, and rally upon the Uninterrupted Succession of Priests, and pull down every Pillar in the Church of Christ, is an Errand on which Rome hath sent many Messengers. And the Papists are no more provoked with your Lorship for these Discourses, than they were Angry at *William Penn* the Jesuite, for preaching up *Quakerism*. So long as they rejoyce in our Divisions, or are glad to see the City of God made a mere *Babel*, they can no more be angry at your Lordship, than at your Advocates.

Dr. *Snape* says, you represent the Church of Christ as a Kingdom, in which Christ neither acts himself, nor hath invested any one else with Authority to act for him. At this your Lordship cries, *p. 22. Lay your Hand upon your Heart, and ask, Is this a Christian, Human, Honest Representation of what your own Eyes read in my Sermon.*

My Lord, I have dealt as sincerely with my Heart as it is possible; and I must confess, I take the Doctor's Representation to be Christian and Honest. For tho' you sometimes contend against Absolute and Indispensible Authority; yet it is plain that you strike at all Authority; and assert, as the Doctor saith, that Christ hath not invested any one on Earth with an Authority to act for him.

Page 11. You expressly say, *That as to the Affairs of Conscience and Eternal Salvation, Christ hath left no Visibly, Human Authority behind him.*

Now, my Lord is not this a saying, that he has left no Authority at all? For Christ came with no other Authority Himself: But as to Conscience and Salvation, he erected a Kingdom, which related to nothing but Conscience and Salvation; and therefore they who have no Authority as to Conscience and Salvation, have no Authority at all in his Kingdom. Conscience and Salvation are the only Affairs of that Kingdom.

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Your Lordship denies that any one has Authority in these Affairs: and yet you take it ill to be charged with asserting, that Christ hath not invested any one with Authority for him. How can any one Act for him, but in his Kingdom? How can they Act in his Kingdom, if they have nothing to do with Conscience and Salvation, when his Kingdom is concern'd with nothing else?

Again, *p.* 16. your Lordship saith, that no one of them (Christians) *any more than another, hath Authority either to make new Laws for Christ's Subjects, or to impose a Sense upon the old ones; or to Judge, Censure or Punish the Servants of another Master, in Matters purely relating to Conscience.*

I can meet with no Divine, my Lord, either Juror or Nonjuror, High or Low, Church-man, or Dissenter, that does not think your Lordship has plainly asserted in these Passages, what the Doctor has laid to your Charge, *that no one is invested with Authority from Christ to act for him.*

Your Lordship thinks, this is sufficiently answered, by saying you contend against an Absolute Authority. You do indeed sometimes joyn Absolute with that Authority you disclaim. But, my Lord, it is still true, that you have taken all Authority from the Church: for the Reasons you every where give against this Authority concludes as strongly against any Degrees of Authority, as that which is truly Absolute.

1st, You disown the Authority of any Christians over other Christians; because they are the *Servants of another Master,* (p. 16.) Now this concludes as strongly against *any* Authority, as that which is *Absolute*: For no one can have the least Authority over those that are entirely under another's Jurisdicton. A small Authority over another's Servant, is as inconsistent as the greatest.

2dly, You reject this Authority, because of the Objects it is exercised upon, *i. e.* Matters purely relating to Conscience and Salvation. Here this Authority is rejected, because it relates to Conscience and Salvation, which does as well exclude every Degree of Authority as that which is Absolute. For if Authority and Conscience cannot suit together, Conscience rejects Authority, as such; and not because there is this or that Degree

gree of it. So that this Argument banishes all Authority.

3dly, Your Lordship denies any Church-Authority; because Christ doth not interpose to convey Infallibility, or assert the true Interpretation of his own Laws†. Now this Reason concludes as full against all Authority, as that which is Absolute. For if Infallibility is necessary to found an Obedience upon in Christ's Kingdom, it's plain, that no body in Christ's Kingdom, hath any Right to any Obedience from others, nor consequently, any Authority to command it, no Members, or Number of Members of it, being infallible.

4thly, Another Reason your Lordship gives against Church-Authority, is this; That it is the taking Christ's Kingdom out of his Hands, and placing it in their own, (p. 14.) Now this Reason proves as much against Authority in general, or any Degrees of it, as that which is Absolute. For if the Authority of others is inconsistent with Christ's being King of his own Kingdom, then every Degree of Authority, so far as it extends, is an Invasion of so much of Christ's Authority, and usurping upon his Right.

The Reason likewise which your Lordship gives to prove the Apostles not Usurpers of Christ's Authority, plainly condemns every Degree of Authority which any Church can now pretend to. They were no Usurpers; because he then interposed to convey Infallibility; and was in all that they ordained: So that that the Authority was his in the strictest Sense*. So that where he does not interpose to convey Infallibility, there every Degree of Authority is a Degree of Usurpation; and consequently, the present Church having no Infallibility, has no Right to exercise the least Degree of Authority, without robbing Christ of his Prerogative.

Thus it plainly appears, that every Reason you have offer'd against Church-Authority, concludes with as much Strength against all Authority, as that which is

† *Serm. p.* 15. * *Answer, p.* 38.

Absolute,

Absolute. And therefore Dr. Snape has done you no Injury in charging you with the Denial of all Authority.

There happens, my Lord, to be only this Difference between your Sermon and the Defence of it, that that is so many Pages against Church-Authority, as such; and this a Confutation of the Pope's Infallibility. It is very strange, that so Clear a Writer who has been so long enquiring into the Nature of Government, should not be able to make himself be understood upon it: That your Lordship should be only preaching against the Pope; and yet all the Lower House of Convocation should unanimously conceive, that your Doctrine therein deliver, tended to subvert all Government and Discipline in the Church of Christ.

And, my Lord, it will appear from what follows, that your Lordship is even of the same Opinion your self; and that you imagin'd you had banish'd all Authority, as such, out of the Church, by those Arguments you had offer'd against an Absolute Authority. This is plain from the following Passage, where you ridicule that which Dr. Snape took to be an Authority, tho' not Absolute. When Dr. Snape said, that no Church-Authority was to be obey'd in any thing contrary to the Reveal'd Will of God; your Lordship triumphs thus: Glorious Absolute Authority indeed, in your own Account, to which Christ's Subjects owe no Obedience, till they have examin'd into his own Declarations; and then they obey not this Authority, but him*.

Here you make nothing of that Authority which is not Absolute; and yet you think it hard to be told, that you have taken away all Church-Authority. That which is Absolute, you expresly deny: And here you say, that which is not Absolute, is nothing at all. Where then is the Authority you have left? Or how is it, that Christ has impower'd any one to act in his Name?

Your Lordship fights safe under the Protection of the

* *Answer*, p. 27.

Word

Word Absolute; but your Aim is at all Church-Power. And your Lordship makes too hasty an Inference, that because it is not Absolute, it is none at all. If you ask, where you have made this Inference; it is on occasion of the above mention'd Triumph; where your Lordship makes it an insignificant Authority which is only to be obey'd so long as it is not contrary to Scripture.

Your Lordship seems to think, all is lost as to Church-Power; because the Dr. does not claim an Absolute one, but allows it to be subject to Scripture; as if all Authority was absolute, or else nothing at all. I shall therefore consider the Nature of this Church-Power; and shew, that tho' it is not Absolute, yet it is a Real Authoarity, and is not such a mere Nothing as your Lordship mkes it.

An Absolute Authority, according to your Lordship, is, what is to be always obey'd by every Individual that is subject to it, in all Circumstances. This is an Authority that we utterly deny to the Church. But, I presume, there may be an Authority inferiour to this, which is nevertheless a Real Authority, and is to be esteem'd as such; and that for these Reasons:

First, I hope, it will be allow'd me, that our Saviour came into the World with Authority. But it was not lawful for the Jews to receive him, if they thought his Appearance not agreeable to those Marks and Characters they had of him in their Scriptures. May I not here say, my Lord, Glorious Authority of Christ indeed, to which the Jews ow'd no Obedience, till they had examin'd their Scriptures; and then they obey, not Him but them!

Again, The Apostles were sent into the World with Authority: But yet, those who thought their Doctrines unworthy of God, and unsuitable to the Principles of Natural Religion, were oblig'd not to obey them. Glorious Authority indeed, of the Apostles, to whom Mankind ow'd no Obedience, till they had, First, examin'd their own Notions of God and Religion; and then they obeyed not the Apostles, but Them!

I hope, my Lord, it may be allow'd, that the Sacra-

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ments are real Means of Grace: But it is certain, they are only conditionally so, If those that partake of them, are endow'd with suitable Dispositions of Piety and Vertue. Glorious Means of Grace of the Sacraments, which is only obtained by such Pious Dispositions; and then it is owing to the Dispositions, and not the Sacraments. Now, my Lord, if there can be such a thing as instituted real Means of Grace, which are only conditionally apply'd, I can't see, why there may not be an instituted real Authority in the Church, which is only to be conditionally obey'd.

Your Lordship has written a great many Elaborate Pages to prove the English Government Limited; and that no Obedience is due to it, but whilst it preserves our Fundamentals; and, I suppose, the People are to Judge for themselves, whether there are safe, or not. Glorious Authority of the English Government, which is to be obey'd no longer, than the People think it their Interest to obey it!

Will you Lordship say, there is no Authority in the English Government, because only a Conditional Obedience is due to it, whilst we think it supports our Fundamentals? Why then must the Church-Authority be reckon'd nothing at all, because only a Rational Conditional Obedience is to be paid, whilst we think it not contrary to Scripture? Is a Limited, Conditional Government in the State, such a Wise, Excellent, and Glorious Constitution? And is the same Authority in Church, such Absurdity, Nonsense, and Nothing at all, as to any Actual Power?

If there be such a thing as Obedience upon Rational Motives, there must be such a thing as Authority that is not Absolute, or that does not require a Blind, Implicit Obedience. Indeed, Rational Creatures can obey no other Authority; they must have Reasons for what they do. And yet because the Church claims only this Rational Obedience, your Lordship explodes such Authority as none at all.

Yet it must be granted, that no other Obedience was due to the Prophets, or our Saviour and his Apostles: They

They were only to be obey'd by those who thought their Doctrines worthy of God. So that if the Church has no Authority, because we must first consult the Scriptures, before we obey it; neither our Saviour, nor his Apostles, had any Authority, because the Jews were first to consult their Scriptures, and the Heathen there Reason, before they obey'd them. And yet this is all that is said against Church-Authority; that because they are to Judge of the Lawfulness of it's Injunctions, therefore they owe it no Obedience: Which false Conclusion, I hope, is enough exposed.

If we think it unlawful to do any thing that the Church requires of us, we must not obey its Authority. So, if we think it unlawful to submit to any Temporal Government, we are not to comply. But, I hope, it will not follow, that the Government has no Authority, because some think it unlawful to comply with it. If we are so unhappy as to Judge wrong in any matter of Duty, we must nevertheless act according to our Judgments; and the Guilt of Disobedience either in Church or State, is more or less, according as our Errour is more or less voluntary, and occasion'd by our own Mismanagement.

I believe, I have shewn, First, that all your Lordship's Arguments against Church-Authority conclude with the same Force against all Degrees of Authority. Secondly, That tho' Church-Authority be not Absolute in a certain Sense; yet if our Saviour and his Apostles had any Authority, the Church may have a Real Authority: For neitheir He, nor his Apostles had such an absolute Authority, as excludes all Consideration and Examination: Which is your Notion of Absolute Authority.

Before I leave this Head, I must observe, that in this very Answer to Dr. Snape, where you would be thought to have exposed this Absolute Authority alone; you exclude all Authority along with it. You ask the Dr.* Is this the whole you can make of it, after all your boast-

* *Answer, p. 26.*

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ed Zeal for Mere Authority? You then say, Why may not I be allow'd to say, no Man on Earth has an Absolute Authority, as well as you? My Lord, there can be no understanding of this, unless Mere Authority and Absolute Authority be taken for the same thing by your Lordship.

But, my Lord, is not the smallest Particle of Matter, Mere Matter? And is it therefore the same as the Whole Mass of Matter? Is an Inch of Space, because it is Mere Space, the same as Infinite Space? How comes it then that Mere Authority is the same as Absolute Authority? My Lord, Mere Authority implies only Authority, as a Mere Man implies only a Man: But your Lordship makes no difference between this, and Absolute Authority; and therefore hath left no Authority in the Church, unless there can be Authority, that is not Mere Authority, i. e. Matter, that is not Mere Matter; or Space, that is not Mere Space.

When the Church enjoyns Matters of Indifference, is she obey'd for any Reason, but for her Mere Authority? But your Lordship allows no Obedience to Mere Authority; and therefore no Obedience, even in indifferent Matters.

Thus do these Arguments of yours lay all waste in the Church: And I must not omit one, my Lord, which falls as heavy upon the State, and makes all Civil Government unlawful. Your Words are these: As the Church of Christ is the Kingdom of Christ, He himself is King; and in this it is imply'd, that He is the sole Law-giver to his Subjects, and Himself the sole Judge of their Behaviour in the Affairs of Conscience and Salvation. If there be any Truth or Force in this Argument, it concludes with the same Truth and Force against all Authority in the Kingdoms of this World. In Scripture we are told, the Most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, (Dan. 4. 17.) that the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, (Isa. 33. 22.) Now, if because Christ is King of the Church, it must be in this imply'd, that He is sole Law-giver to his Subjects; it is plain to a Demonstration, that because God is King and Law-giver

o the whole Earth, that therefore He is sole Law-giver o his Subjects; and consequently, that all Civil Au-rity, all Human Laws, are mere Invasions and Usur-tions upon God's Authority, as King of the whole rth.

Is no Body to have any Jurisdiction in *Christ's King-m, because* He is *King* of it? How then comes any one o have *any Authority* in the *Kingdoms* of this World, hen God has declar'd himself the *Law-giver*, and *King* f the whole World? Will your Lordship say, that Christ hath left us the *Scriptures*, as the *Statute-Laws* of is *Kingdom*, to prevent the Necessity of *After-Laws*? t may be answer'd, That God has given us *Reason* for ur *Constant Guide*; which, if it were as duly attended , would as *certainly* answer the Ends of *Civil Life*, as e Observance of the *Scriptures* would make us *Good ristians*.

But, my Lord, as Human Nature, if left to it self, ould neither answer the *Ends* of a *Spiritual* or *Civil* ciety; so a *constant Visible* Government in both, is *ually Necessary*: And I believe, it appears to all unpre-dic'd Eyes, that in this Argument *at least*, your Lord-ip has declar'd both *equally Unlawful*.

Your Lordship saith, † *The Exclusion of the Papists from e Throne, was not upon the Account of their Religion.* Three ines after, you say, *I have contended indeed, elsewhere, at it was their unhappy Religion which* alone *made them capable in themselves, of Governing this Protestant Na-n, by the Laws of the Land.* My Lord, I can't recon-le these two Passages. *Popery alone*, you say, was eir *Incapacity*. From which it may be inferr'd, they ad *no other Incapacity*. Yet your Lordship saith, they ere not excluded upon the Account of their *Religion*. little after, you say, *The Ground of their Exclusion was t their Religion, consider'd*, as such; *but the Fatal, Na-ral, Certain Effect of it upon themselves to our Destruction.* As for Instance; your Lordship may mean thus: If

† *Answer. p.* 25.

a *Man* of a *great Estate* dies, he loses his *Right* to his Estate; not upon the Account of *Death*, consider'd, as *such*; but for the *Certain, Fatal, Natural Effect* of it upon himself. Or, suppose a Person is excluded for being an *Idiot*; it is not for his Idiocy, consider'd, *as such*; but for the *Certain, Fatal, Natural Effect* of it upon himself to our Destruction.

My Lord, this is prodigious deep: I wish it be clear; or that it be not too refin'd a Notion for common Use on this Subject. Likewise I do not conceive, my Lord, what you can call the *Fatal, Natural, Certain Effects* of any one's Religion. I am sure, amongst *Protestants*, there are *Natural, Certain Effects* of their Religion upon them; that their Practices don't *Fatally* follow their Principles: Neither is there any demonstrative Certainty that a *Bishop* can't be against *Episcopacy*.

If the Papists are so *unalterably sincere* in their *Religion*, that we can prove their *certain* Observation of it; it's pity but they had our *Principles*, and we had their *Practice*. I have not that good Opinion of the *Papists* which your Lordship hath: I believe, several of them sit as loose to their Religion *as other Folks*. Does your Lordship think, that all *Papists* are alike? That Natural *Temper, Ambition* and *Education*, don't make as much Difference amongst them, as the *same things* do among us? Are all *Protestants* loose and libertine alike? why should all *Papists* be the same *Zealots*? If not, my Lord, then these *Effects* you call *Fatal, Natural, and Certain* may be not to be depended upon.

Your Lordship knows, that it was generally believed that King *Charles the Second* was a Papist: But I never heard of any *Fatal, Natural, and Certain Effects of his Religion upon him*. All that one hears of it, is, that he lived like a Protestant, and dy'd like a Papist. I suppose your Lordship will allow, that several who were late Papists, are now true Protestants: I desire therefore to know, what is become of the *Fatal, Natural, and Certain Effects of their Religion*?

My Lord, I beg of you to lay your Hand again upon your Heart, and ask, whether this be strict Reasoning?

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Whether it is possible in the very Nature of the thing, that *such Fatal, Natural, and Certain* Effects should follow such a *Giddy, Whimsical, Uncertain* Thing, as *Human and Free Choice*? My Lord, is it neither possible for Papists to change or conceal their Religion for Interest, or leave it through a Conscientious Conviction? If the former is impossible, then, according to your Lordship, it is the *safest Religion* in the World; because they are all sure of being *sincere*, and consequently the first Favourites of God. If the latter is impossible, then a great many *Fine Sermons and Discourses* have been written to as wise Purposes, as if they had been directed to the *Wind*.

I come now to your Lordship's Definition of *Prayer*, *Calm and Undisturb'd Address to God*. It seems very strange, that so great a Master of Words, as your Lordship, should pick out Two so very exceptionable, that all your Lordship's Skill could not defend them, but by saving their first and obvious Sense. Who would not take *Calm* and *Undisturb'd* to be very like *Quiet* and *Unmov'd*? Yet your Lordship dislikes those Expressions. But if these don't give us a true *Idea* of *Prayer*, you have made a very narrow *Escape*, and have given us a Definition of *Prayer*, as *near* to a *wrong one* as possible.

Prayer chiefly consisteth of *Confession* and *Petition*. Now to be *calm*, and free from *Worldly Passions*, is a necessary Temper to the right Discharge of such *Duties*: but why our *Confession* must be so *Calm*, and free from all *Perturbation* of Spirit; why our Petitions may not have all that Fervour and Warmth, with which either *Nature* or *Grace* can supply, is very surprizing.

My Lord, we are advis'd to be *Dead to the World*; and I humbly suppose, no more is *implied* in it, than to keep our Affections from being too much engaged in it; and that a *Calm Undisturb'd*, i. e. *Dispassionate* Use of the World is very *consistent* with our being dead to it. If so, then this *Calm Undisturbed Address to Heaven, is a kind of Prayer* that is very consistent with our being *Dead* to *Heaven*.

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We are forbid to *love* the World; and yet no gre
er *Abstraction* from it is requir'd, than to use it *Ca*
and *Undisturb'd*. We are commanded to set our Affec
ons on Things above; and yet according to your Lor
ship, the same Calm *Undisturb'd Temper is enough*. A
cording to this, therefore we are to be *affected*, or rath
Unaffected alike, with *this*, and the *next* World; sin
we are to be *Calm* and *Undisturbed* with respect to *bo*

The Reason your Lordship offers for this *Definiti*
of Prayer, is this; because you * *look upon Calmness a*
Undisturbedness to be the Ornament and Defence of H
man Understanding in all its Actions. My Lord, th
plainly supposes there is no such thing as the Righ
Use of our Passions: for if we could ever use them t
any Advantage, then it could not be the Ornament o
our Nature, to be dispassionate alike in all its Action
It is as much the Ornament and Defence of our Natur
to be differently Affected with all Things, according t
their respective Differences, as 'tis to understand or con
ceive different Things according to their real Diff
rence. It would be no Ornament or Credit to us t
conceive no Difference betwixt a Mountain and
Mole-Hill: And our Rational Nature is as much di
grac'd when we are no more affected with great Thin
than with small. It is the Essential Ornament of ou
Nature, to be as sensibly affected in a different Mann
with the different Degrees of Goodness of Things,
'tis to perceive exactly the different Natures or Rela
ons of Things. Passion is no more a Crime, as such, th
the Understanding is as such: 'Tis nothing but mis
king the Value of Objects, that makes it criminal. A
Infinite Good cannot be too passionately desir'd; no
a Real Evil too vehemently abhorr'd. Mere Philos
phy, my Lord, would teach us that the Dignity
Human Nature is best declar'd by a Pungent Uneasine
for the Misery of Sin, and a Passionate warm Applic
tion to Heaven for Assistance. Let us now consult t
Scripture. St. *Paul* describes a Godly Sorrow som
thing different from your Lordship's Calm and U

* *Answ. p.* 11.

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disturbed Temper, in these Words: When ye sorrowed after a Godly sort, what Carefulness it wrought in you! Yea, what Indignation, yea, what Fear, yea, what Zeal, yea, what Revenge! (2 Cor. 7. 11.) My Lord, I suppose, these are not so many other Words for Calm and Undisturb'd. Yet as different as they are, the Apostle makes them the Qualities of a Godly Sorrow. And all this at the Expence of that Calmness which your Lordship terms the Ornament of Human Nature. Dr. *Snape* pleads for the Fervency and Ardour of our Devotions, from our Saviour's Praying more earnestly before his Passion.

Your Lordship replies, that *this* can give no Direction as to our *daily Prayers*; because it was what our *Saviour* himself knew nothing of, but this once. The Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* knew nothing of this way of Reasoning. For as an Argument for *Daily Patience*, he bids us look unto *Jesus* who endur'd the *Cross*, because he dy'd for us, leaving us an *Example*.

Our Saviour my Lord, *suffer'd* and *dy'd* but *once*: Yet is it made a Reason for our *daily Patience*, and propos'd as an *Example* for us to imitate.

If therefore, my Lord, his Passion so, *extraordinary*, in it self, and as much above the Power of Human Nature to bear, as the *Intensenes* of his Devotions *exceeded* our Capacities for Prayer, be yet proposed as an *Example* to us in the *ordinary* Calamities of Life; how comes it, that his *Devotion* at that time should have no manner of Use or Direction in it as to our Devotions, especially in our *Distress*? How comes it, that his Suffering should have so much of *Example* in it, so much to be imitated; but the Manner of his *Devotion then* having nothing of Instruction, nothing that need be imitated by us? All the Reason that is offer'd, is the *Singularity* and *Extraordinarines* of it, when the same may be said of his *Passion*; yet that is allow'd to be an *Example*.

Your Lordship is pleased, for the Information of your *Unwary Readers*, to reason thus upon the Place: *If this be the Example of our Saviour*, to assure us of his *Will about the Temper* necessary *to* Prayer; *it will follow, that our Blessed Lord Himself never truly prayed before this time: And yet*

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again, if he prayed more earnestly, it will follow, that he had prayed before; and consequently, that this Temper in which He now was, was not necessary *to* Prayer.

My Lord, one would think this Elaborate Proof was against something asserted. Here you have indeed a thorough Conquest; but it is over *no body*. For did any one ever assert, that such *Extraordinary Earnestness* was necessary to Prayer? Does Dr. *Snape* or any Divine allow of no *Prayers*, except we sweat *Drops of Blood*? Will your Lordship say, that the *Necessity* of this temper is imply'd in the Quotation of this Text, as a Direction for Prayer? I answered, just as much as we are all *obliged* to die upon the *Cross*, because his *Sufferings* there are proposed to us as an *Example*.

The Plain Truth of the Matter, my Lord, I take to be this: Our *Saviour's Sufferings* on the Cross were such as no Mortal can undergo; yet they are justly propos'd as an *Example* to us to bear with Patience such Sufferings as are within the Compass of Human Nature. His Earnest Devotion before his Passion, far *exceeded* any *Fervours* which the Devoutest of Mankind can attain to: Yet is it justly propos'd to us as an *Example*, to excite us to be as Fervent as we can; and may be justly alledg'd in our Defence, when our *warm* and *Passionate* Addresses to God in our *Calamities*, are condemned as *Superstitious Folly*. My Lord, must nothing be an *Example*, but what we can *exactly* come up to? How then can the *Life* of our *Saviour*, which was intirely free from *Sin*, be an Example to us? How could it be said in Scripture, *Be ye holy, for I am holy*, Can any one be *Holy* as *God is*?

My Lord, one might properly urge the *Practice* of the Primitive Christians, who parted with all they had for the Support of their Indigent Brethren, as an Argument for *Charity*; without designing to oblige People to part with all they have: And he that should in answer to such an *Argument*, tell the World that Charity is only a calm undisturb'd Good-Will to all Mankind, would just as much set forth the true Doctrine of Charity, as He that defines Prayer to a Calm and Undisturbed Address to Heaven, for no other Reason, but because no certain

Degrees

Degrees of Fervour or Affection are necessarily requir'd to constitute Devotion. My Lord, has *Charity* nothing to do with the Distrubution of Alms, because no certain Allowance is fix'd? Why then must Prayer have nothing to do with Heat and Fervency, because no fix'd Degrees of it are necessary?

Therefore, my Lord, as I would define Charity, to be a Pious Distribution of so much of our Goods to the Poor, as is suitable to our Circumstance; so I would define Prayer, and Address to Heaven, enlivened with such Degrees of Fervour and Intenseness, as our Natural Temper, influenc'd with a true Sense of *God could beget in us.*

Your Lordships says, you only desire to strike at the Root of superstitious Folly, and establish Prayer in its Room; And this is to be effected by making our Addressed calm and undisturb'd; by which we are to understand; a Freedom from Heat and Passion, as your Lordship explains it by an Application to your self.

If therefore, any one should happen to be so disturb'd at his Sins, as to offer a Broken and Contrite Heart to God, Instead of one calm and undisturb'd; or, like Holy *David*, his Soul should be a-thirst for God, or pant after him as the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks, this would not be Prayer, but Superstitious Folly.

My Lord, *Calmness* of Temper, as it signifies a Power over our Passions, is a happy Circumstance of a Rational Nature, but no farther: When the Object is well chosen, there is no danger in the Pursuit.

The Calmness your Lordship hath describ'd is fit for a Philosopher, in his Study, who is solving Mathematical Problems. But if he should come abroad into the World, thus entirely empty of all Passion, he would live to as much Purpose as if he had left his understanding behind him.

What a fine Subject, my Lord, would such a one make, who, when he heard of Plots, Invasions, and Rebellions, would continue as calm and undisturb'd, as when he was com-

comparing Lines and Figures: Such a dull Subject would scarce be taken for any great Loyalist.

Your Lordship in other Places, hath recommended an open and undisguis'd Zeal,* and told us such things as ought to alarm the Coldest Heart.† Sure my Lord this is something more than Calm and undisturb'd? and will your Lordship, who hath expressed so much Concern for this Ornament and Defence of Human Understanding, persuade us to part with the least degree of it upon any account? I am my Lord, with all the Respect that is due to your Lordship's Station and Character,)

Your most Humble and Obedient Servant.

William Law.

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* Serm. 5. Nov. P. 5. † Serm. 2. p. 44.

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